SMC-SESSION

DAS SPECTRUM - MAGAZIN

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Bild: Winter 2002 von Gas 13

Zum Jahresabschluss nochmal das volle Programm: Alles rund um den Spectrum.

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Publisher

The Spectrum-User-Club, formally known as the Spectrum-User-Club Wuppertal, is the oldest existing Spectrum-Club in Germany, the ASC is the only Spectrum-Club in Austria. Since 1998 the Club-Magazine SUC-SESSION and SCENE+ have been sent together to all club members. They are compiled from contributions produced by the editor(s) as well as the readers. We call on all readers to send in their contributions as text files on cassette, +D, Opus, MB02 or MS-DOS (Word or pure Text files) or handwritten, per e-mail or printed on paper to us.

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How can you become a Member

Membership is basically free but the main services, the clubs magazine SUC-SESSION and SCENE+ can be subscribed to individually or together.

The Price:	Single issue	Yearly subscription (6x)
1) SUC-Session Magazine	3,00 •	16,00 •
2) SUC-Session Magazine as a PDF-Download	1,50 •	8,00 •
3) SCENE+ Disk-magazine	2,50 •	12,00 •
4) SCENE+ on Cassette	3,50 •	18,00 •
5) SCENE+ as a TAP-Download	1,50 •	8,00 •
6) Combi-packet SUC-Session & SCENE+ Disk	5,00 •	26,00 •
7) Combi-packet SUC-Session & SCENE + Tape	5,50 •	28,00 •

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New members who are ordering the Diskette version of SCENE+ should state the required format, we have available MB02+, Opus, +D und now also D80/Didaktik. If you are ordering additional Disk's or Cassettes together with a Combi-Packet then the price for these must be added to the Subscription number. Any questions should simply contact us per E-mail or under: 0711/775033.

THE NEW SCENE+

So, a good start should look just a little different. The first issue of SCENE+ under the direction of Mirko was nearly 2 months late, the next didn't appear at all...until today. In order to get everything back on track Mirko will bring out a double issue. As I am writing these lines it's not yet completely ready, but when everything goes according to plan then you should have the double issue in you post box or available to download by Christmas.

The main thing is that the new Text-viewer is up and running. And on this new basis Mirko will be able to develop the magazine further. It's important not to forget that Mirko just like myself does all of the work in his somewhat limited free time, so I ask for your patience when the proposed timetable isn't always kept to 100%. In any case nothing will be reduced, everyone will receive 2 diskettes for the last two issues, it's just that these two diskettes will in effect form one large magazine. And a small bonus for the MB02-Users. Although the diskettes will contain extra material for MB02 users it is possible to pack two +D diskettes onto one MB02 diskette. So the second diskette will be empty but because we don't want to send out empty diskettes Mirko will fill it with a surprise item. Just switch on and lean back and enjoy. So here is the complete offer for this issue, part of which has already been announced in SUC-Session:

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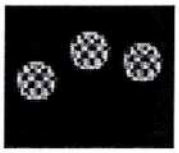
Intros:
C2h5oh Part 1
C2h5oh Part 2
Saturn
Eeon
Guide
InCrease
Insult
DizzyZone



Demos:
Don´t smoke (p18!)
Dupa (MB-02)
LarksVomit
Polish
cozt (MB-02)

Graphics:
Forever2e3gfx1-8
Forever2e3nr9

Music:
Chocoholica

Utilities:
MulticolorEditor MSE2_5
PFN_Print
MB_Commander_1.2 (MB-02)
RTCPatch (MB-02)

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Music-Demo
„MusicTape" from Yerzmeyey

Games:
1Kanoid
Dotathon
Easyfrog
Pobble
Shisen1k
Snake1k
Soliyawn
Spectris
ZTrack1k
Samegame
Squamble
Subscan
Mental Blocks
Bad-Demo
SkintJetSetWilly 128
Top Shelf Challenge (p18!)
Kikstart2 128 (MB-02)

Please note that some of the programs are only available on the MB02 version as they are special programs for this device. As well as that there are some items marked with „p18". Which just means that these programs should not be run when there are children present. But now we have done enough to wet your appetite, just wait for the diskettes which will of course be sent separately and not with SUC-Session for those with the double subscription.

Preface

Dear Spectrum-User,
So another year is coming to an end and it's time once again to take a look back. This year we have realised a lot of new things and a lot that is familiar remains with us. In first place is of course the Spectrum: it was 20 years old. The super celebration unfortunately didn't take place. A pity really. But it's still much more than many had expected 20 years ago, just the fact that the Spectrum still exists and certainly that there are still users who are able to create fascinating things for it.
And there is still our magazine which not only because of the English edition, has increased it's readership by almost 80%. A super success, because if we face the truth: and it had continued as in the previous years then the club and the magazine would have been moving towards their end. But as it is now we are all full of hope, that we will in the near future win even more readers, because more readers means more readers letters, articles and information to be exchanged and provides a wider base for all those producing new things such as Mirko, LCD and myself from SUC not to forget the many programmers of games and demo's.
When it comes to games and demo's and of course utilities , screens and sounds then we mustn't forget to mention our second magazine from SUC/ASC SCENE+. It certainly didn't have a very easy year this year. After the usual delays in the creation of the magazine which we had got used to, it got worse with LCD's eye problems meaning he could not continue to work on it. As LCD was interested in giving the magazine up into good hands to concentrate more on his programming projects, we used the chance for a change and welcomed Mirko onto the team. This did not happen without a number of difficulties, LCD, with his eye problems and very restricted vision couldn't offer the level of support at the beginning which was perhaps necessary and so the next issue was very late indeed, the one following that had to be dropped but will now be replaced by a double edition.
There were two SUC-User Meets this year, as always the Spectrology in Wittenberg, organised by Norbert Opitz and the Spectrumania in Stuttgart, which I organised myself. Both meetings were characterized by a very friendly atmosphere even though there were of course no big new presentations. There were also no Demo-competitions at these events, not surprising as there is now only 1 active coder group in Germany.

All in all a turbulent year is coming to an end and when we look back we have to say that this 20th year was a successful year for the Spectrum. New software appeared as in the past and the magazine developed in a very positive way with the users supporting it all the way.
So with that said I would like to ask you to please continue supporting the club and especially by voting for your program of the year in our competition. Information about this competition and it's results are spread beyond the borders of the club and it would be very embarrassing if we had to cancel it because there were only 3 votes cast.
I'd like to say to all of those of you who have just developed a taste for our magazine that the club has most of the editions available from stock and depending on the quantity, can supply them for a very reasonable price. When you order a number of magazines together there is a great saving on postage costs which we are happy to pass on to our readers.

In the German issue I did put here a merry christmas, but the English issue is too late, so I wish you just all the best this year.

Thomas

Yearly Contest: Program of the Year

Some of you may be asking yourselves what's happened to the survey card which we send at the end of each year. Yes, a few look forward to being asked but only a few. Last year we had so few replies that it was impossible to choose a winner in the competition 'Game of the year'. We initiate this sort of action only if the members support it, this wasn't the case last year, and so this year no card.

In spite of this you do have one chance of rehabilitation: Even without the card there is going to be a selection though without the usual questions about which Spectrum and which Floppy system you use. Now that we are in the age of the emulator there are anyway not really much new information to collect and through SCENE+ we know which diskette systems are in use. And last but not least we have to say that SINTECH is the last commercial source of Spectrum's and through the sales figures we know which Spectrums are in favour at the moment. By the way it's the Spectrum +3 which leads the way at the moment...

But back to the competition. Mirko and I have thought up something special for this year. We are going to nominate a number of titles to choose from. This doesn't mean you can't select another title if you want to. The only important thing is: That the program appeared in SCENE+ sometime in the year 2002.
Additionally something for our new readers: Not many people today can motivate themselves to write new programs for the Spectrum, but just recently there has once again been an increase. The reason is a number of competitions in all categories whereby we all profit from the large number of programs produced. We also want to provide the programmers with some motivation, not least so that we will have input for our SCENE+, but also just so that there will be some new programs. In the main the programmers don't do it for money, especially with the Demo competitions the Olympic motto seems to be the important thing ‚taking part is everything'. In spite of this the winners we select are rewarded with cash prizes. The value of these cash prices is dependant on how much there is in our donation pot.. Anyone can make a contribution to the pot, so that the final sum is not yet known. If you would like to make a small contribution then you can do it by means of a simple transfer to the club account and using the identifying word 'Spende (Donation)'. Even 2 or 3 Euros has it's effect here.

However what's important is that when possible everyone takes part by voting. It doesn't matter whether you subscribe to SCENE+ or not. If you know of one of the programs and find it good then you can vote. Voting is very simple, a letter, a postcard, an E-mail or a Fax... Simply include your name and the 3 programs which you think are the best and send it to us. The winners will be announced in the issue 02/2003.

So here are our nominations, but as we said you can choose other programs if you want to:

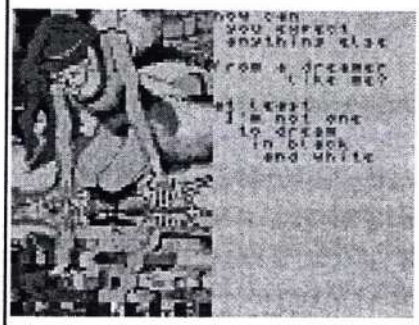
Best Demos 2002:

Alter Ego
(Hooy Program)

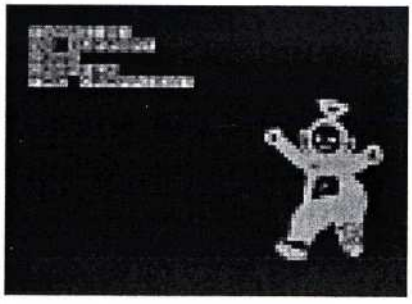
Reject (Factor6)

Jaundice (Gasman)

Loosing Victoria
(Gasman/Hooy-Program)



Missing in Fun
(Unbelievables)



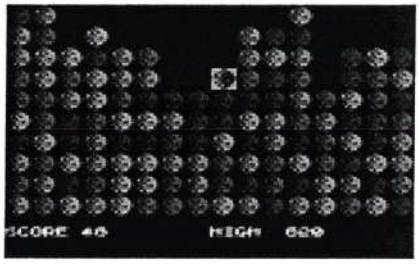
Beste Games 2002:

Arkanoid 128
(DRV53B6/PHF)
only Demo released)

Far Space (Mayhem)

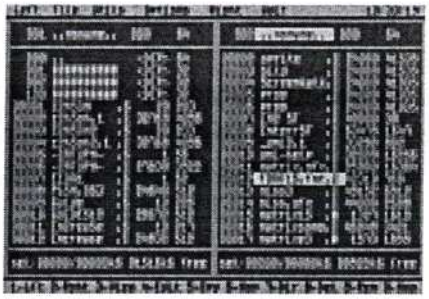
Dotathon 1k ((Russell Marks)

Samegame 1k
(Dominic Morris)



Moorhuhn (Triebkraft)

Best Utilities 2002
MB-Commander (Shrek)



As we said these are just some tip's to help jog your memory about some of the programs from this year. It's certain that some of you will have other favourites which immediately spring to mind. These really are only suggestions, which Mirko the creator of SCENE+ has mentioned as being especially noteworthy.

So simply send your Postcard, E-mail or Fax with your 3 favourites to the following address:

Mirko Seidel
Neenstedter Str. 20
D-89183 Breitingen
(Germany)
E-Mail: ms-256-email@gmx.de

Alternatively you can send your results to the usual club address and we will send them on. The Fax number is: 0711-775033. So you can happily send you choices to this number.

Each of your 3 choices have the same value, in the end it's the program chosen most often which wins.

We hope for lot's of votes.

Mirko und Thomas

Readers Letters

We have a lot of questions this time but what is very clear is that more and more it's only the new readers who are sending us questions. What's happened to the old hands? No more questions. OK, but when you're all so perfect and don't have any more questions then why don't you even send some comments about the questions from the new readers? Often questions are left open or at least not fully answered. In individual cases I've heard that readers have contacted each other directly. Very good, but it would be better if all of the other readers could benefit from your exchange of experiences. So here with your results, this is your forum, your magazine. Which you really shouldn't forget.

The first question comes from Adam Short:
If I may, just a couple of quick questions about the ROMs in Didaktik Kompact. Which ROM is used for the 128K extension? Is it the original Sinclair ROM? I'm asking because I would like to extend it to support the built in diskette drive. I'm going to download a copy of the ROM from the internet and experiment a little on it but first I need to know at least which ROM it is. Of course I then need to take a look into the 48K Rom from the Kompakt to find out how the drive works. Is that available on the Internet? Are there any Spectrum emulators which use the Didaktik ROM?
Thanks, Adam.

Hallo Adam, The 128K ROM really is just the standard 128K ROM from Sinclair. I haven't tried it but maybe the following would work: Type USR 0 in 128K Mode. With the real Spectrum you end up in 48K mode with 128K of RAM. Perhaps the disk support will then function. I have seen 128K games on the Didaktik 128K, so it must be possible. Though I don't know of a source for the information, on the net everything is in the Czech language. Perhaps one of our Czech readers could provide some further help, or anyone else who is well up on the subject.

Next a letter from Thomas Schwarz which arrived just one day after Spectrumania...OK, if your forgetful then you just have to write letters:
Hi Thomas& Annette!(now I know the names!!!!)
I have 2 problem, firstly despite all of the cable modifications I simply cannot get the HD diskette drive from my PC to load sensibly. It keeps on giving me Sector error track 0 sector 1 even with newly formatted disks and it doesn't matter whether they are DD or HD. And secondly at the 'Meet' did anyone find a white 6 socket extension cable with red illuminated switch which I forgot to pack! Oh well I'm just very forgetful ;-)
Please be kind enough to give me Fred´s E-mail address, I would like to ask him how much he wants for the MB02, and don't forget to keep me informed when it comes to the MB2.5, I'd really like one of those. And please don't send the drive yet. Perhaps I'll find another when I can't find any useful tips on how to get my HD to run correctly on the +D. Also, I'm not getting the Real spectrum Emulator or the BMP2SCR Programs to run. I've sent a mail to LCD, perhaps he can give me some tips.
> And something else which would interest me, with the super T-Shirt offer for 21Euro's do you get the woman as well? And of course the hair colour should match the colour of the T-Shirt ;-) See you soon, Thomas

Hm, I packed up the cable, I thought it probably belonged to you. I wanted to send it to you along with the drive. I have found one I just have to test it. It's also an HD-drive but modified. As to your HD-drive: if you find a switch or a solder bridge somewhere or other where you can select between DS1 and DS0 (sometimes it isn't called DS but it's always 0 up to a maximum of 4) then you can use this to select with which drive number it connects when you don't use a cross connected cable. The one I have here can do it but the one from Saturday can't.
You can Mail Fred he can help you and also with the MB02 question (if it's not already sold). E-Mail: f.duerkes@henke-autoteile.de **This is the only way to reach him.**

And as for the woman...I also though she was included and I was really dissapointed, when I opened the package. Clearly a case of fraud. I will complain. With the 10 Shirts I bought I should have got at least one woman. Still: there are at least extra versions for men and women. Those for the women are a bit narrower in fit....super, or?

James Fell has quite a different question:
Do you know anything about the people from the Chaos Computer Club? I might go to their conference in Berlin (http://www.ccc.de/congress/2002/).
James

Hallo James, this club is very well known. One of the member hacked into the NASA-Computer but that was 20 years ago. Today they help companies to close security leaks in their EDP systems.

As in the past the interest continues in the projects which we support:
Hi Thomas,
how's it going with the +D clone? I hope lot's of people have shown an interest. Lots of greetings
Liam Tummons

Hallo Liam,
No, in fact their hasn't been much feedback, only from you and a couple of others. A number of those interested have bought themselves the D80 Diskette interface, because they didn't want to wait any longer for an interface which might never be built. Others would rather wait for the MB03 now that it looks as if it will really arrive. In reality it seems there are only 2 users who definitely want the clone. The other simply wants an example of every interface which was ever built and so you are really the only one who is really interested.
Though I'm sure if the +D clone was available it would be possible to find customers for it. It's simply difficult to offer something which doesn't yet exist. People are careful, in the past there were too many things offered which then never appeared. Some are still waiting for the LOKI...

As a result of an article on the internet which we publicised Liam wanted to find out more information on his own account. The E-Mail addresses of Philip Mulrane and our reader Peter Rennefeld are available on the internet. Unfortunately there is no

response from Peter, something I also discovered myself, but here is a statement from Philip sent to us by Liam:

I don't have any contact with Peter, his only input to the project was that he lent me one of his original +D's so that I could make corrections to the circuit diagram. A number of people have contacted me after they had no success in contacting Peter. But I'm in the same situation, I also can't get a response from Peter. I don't know what's happened, I think he may just be too busy. Unfortunately I can't offer any more help than that. Philip

Hallo Liam,
to make everything clear, Philip developed the circuit diagram, that was what he wanted to do and he never offered to build a clone of the +D, it's clear on the web site that other wanted to do that. As for Peter Rennefeld: he is very busy. It's simply the case that sometimes private things have to take priority over the Spectrum and this is the case with Peter (House, Wife, Children).I can't say more on the subject than that as he hasn't answered any of my E-mails for the past year, but that's not a problem. I think it's super that someone took on this project and as far as I have heard it has reached a point not far from completion. The person involved is also called Peter, but not Rennefeld, it's Mai. He has already had some boards produced and now is arranging for the mounting of the components. I am in regular contact with him and I feel sure that he will bring the project to fruition. Now something about the SPC: The SPC, that is the Spectrum-Profi-Club is often connected with this subject and while Peter Rennefeld doesn't answer his E-Mails the idea that it's the SPC which doesn't answer is simply not correct. The SPC in the person of the Club's leader Wolfgang Haller always answers his E-Mails and letters promptly. He has absolutely nothing to do with this subject, Peter Rennefeld just happens to be a member of his club just as he is a reader of our magazine.
But something additionally in Peter's defence: obviously it's not in the spirit of things to simply not answer your E-Mails. But we don't know all of the facts and so should not cast hasty judgements. Peter has always helped to move this project towards reality even when not with actions at least by not letting this subject be forgotten. Even if at the moment he is not a reliable partner in the discussion he has in the past done a lot for the Spectrum and we shouldn't forget that.

Christof Odenthal collects curiosities from the Internet:

Hallo people,
I have just discovered something curious in one of the 'Hot forums'. Once upon a time there was a computer in the GDR called the „KC 85" (did it have anything to do with the GDR CPC-Clone „KC Kompakt"?) – and it seems they have pressed software for the Compi onto a vinyl record!
mad, or what? Here's a link where you should be able to find out more:
http://www.i-m.de/home/compmuseum/sonstige/kc85_3.htm
Tzz, unbelievable... If you'd like then you can mention it in the Club-Magazine, I was astounded and I'm probably not the only one.
Gruß, Christof

Hallo Christof. I wasn't surprised. BASICODE is the name of a simple program language which was compatible with all of the main Home computers from the 80'. I think it was originally produced in Holland and well loved in the GDR. I have never seen a software vinyl record myself but a book from the time when the GDR existed I have read that such things were produced.

The first contact with Mathias Scheurer concerned the IDE-Interface. There have been lot's of further contacts and now we have got to know each other personally, Mathias takes both SUC-SESSION and SCENE+. But let's start from the beginning:

Dear Herr Eberle,
I would love to have the details of the following Interface
- IDE-Kit, complete
There is unfortunately no information about this hardware interface on the web site.
- For which Spectrum is the interface intended?
- What can you connect to it?
- Do you need a new ROM?
Best wishes, Mathias Scheurer

Hallo Herr Scheurer,
I always like to hear from anyone who is interested in the Spectrum, especially when it's someone I don't yet know. The IDE-Interface is only briefly explained in the description of the MB02 because it is in fact a hardware accessory for the MB02.
In theory the interface could work on any Spectrum but in practice only the MB02 has the operating system necessary to support it, and without an operating system even the best of hardware is useless.
With it you can connect IDE hard-disks to the Spectrum and then use it like a floppy disk (or rather like a number of floppy disks). I have one myself and couldn't work any more without it.

As I said that wasn't the only E-Mail from Mathias and as his questions (as they are by most of the new readers) are very interesting here are all of the Mails once again:

Hallo,
thank you for the quick answer. I stumbled on the Spectrum scene by accident while surfing the E-Bay site (I'd found a Multiface 1 in the cellar), with the result that I bid for and bought a number of Sinclair devices.
At the time I owned a rather heavily modified 48K Spectrum with Dk-tronics Keyboard housing and double microdrives, a Spectrum+, Spectrum 128K, +2 and a QL. Strangely the +3 must have passed me by. I had all of these computers as the first Vobis PC's arrived on the scene, and unfortunately were sold out... which I really regret today!
I was one of the first users of the Post-16/48K-Spectrums (and QL) in Germany, at the time my father was active in the German Sinclair organisation in Bad Homburg. The Spectrum was my first real computer. I was already a member of the Spectrum User Club Wuppertal and in the Spectrum Profi Club!

I know your name from the time of Raetz and Eberle publishing (Computer Kontakt etc.) ;-)
I'm really happy that the Spectrum scene is still alive (See also ZXFormat), I really didn't expect that, and was further surprised that there is new Spectrum hardware available to buy. What I'm looking for is the possibility to connect a Hard-disk to the Spectrum, so that I can end the long loading times for programs. Which (when possible cheap and simple) possibilities can you recommend? Are there any Spectrum events planned for this year?
Mathias

Hallo Mathias,
I'm really happy that you can once again be motivated by the Spectrum. It's for those sorts of people that we have our club. Your may recognise my name but I'm not the same Thomas Eberle who produced Computer Kontakt. That's just someone with the same name. It's amazing what coincidences exist...
For this year unfortunately all of the Spectrum events have finished, I think the next great show will be in March in the Slovak republic. „Forever" is perhaps the best Demo-show for 8 bit computers. As for the Spectrum it will be at the earliest April before an event is planned in Germany and we don't have the exact details yet.
There aren't any really fully developed Hard-disk interfaces for the Spectrum yet, the interface we are offering only works together with a diskette interface. So your next step would be a diskette interface and there are 3 possibilities:
- A D80 Diskette interface with drive complete for 111 Euro, can be ordered from us and is available with only a short lead time. No possibility for a Hard-disk.
- You put your name on the list for an MB2.5, when there is enough interest this interface will be produced. It looks good at the moment. But it isn't cheap and will probably cost over 200 Euros. For which as an advantage over the normal MB02 you have an integrated Hard-disk interface.
- You put your name on the waiting list for a +D. This is a simple diskette interface. The format is widely used but there are a large number of requests for this interface, so there can be long delays before one is available. The price with the drive is 143,00 Euro. No possibility to connect a Hard-disk.
If you really want to go in the direction of a Hard-disk then there is really only the MB2.5, or you buy a +3 and for this machine there is a modification kit for a Hard-disk.

Friedrich Erhardt ws very pleased to contact us and be able to get a new keyboard folia:
Dear Herr Eberle, it's really great that it's so uncomplicated. I was nearly going mad before I discovered your address. I have a 48K with the rubber keyboard, so the folia for 11 Euros was just right. If you can send it with the post that would be great then I don't have to wait in to receive it. Also I'm happy to look at the Spectrum magazine. But first I want my Speccy to be running properly :)
PS: I have an old cassette record and want to load a game with it. After Load the TV blinks with red and blue stripes but other than that nothing happens. With a new recorder it works without problem. What can be the fault? I've tried it on the extension speaker output. Too weak? Cassette drive has too much wow and flutter? speed? Any other incompatibilities?
Thanks in advance
Friedrich Erhard

Hallo Herr Erhard,
we don't send anything with the Post, they lose too many items or damage them. The folia is very delicate and for this reason has to be sent in a large box and well packed. To fit it you need to carefully lift the metal plate on the Spectrum. Very slowly or it will bend. It's bound to bend a bit you won't be able to avoid it, but you can carefully bend it back into shape.
As for the cassette recorder it can of course be defect. More likely is that the head is dirty or misaligned. Simply try cleaning it and aligning it properly. Does it have a tone control? If so then set it to the highest level (high frequencies need to be loud). Usually the head has a small adjustment screw holding it in place. This screw can be out of adjustment. Adjust this screw so that the tones are clear and the high frequencies are clearly heard, as a comparison simply take the recorder which works. It's pretty sure to improve things.

And then a third Mail from Mathias with more questions. This doesn't mean he's getting on our nerves, in fact the exact opposite. He's showing just how interested he is in the subject and at the same time giving us things to fill the Readers corner with. Keep up the good work:
Hallo Thomas, it's so difficult to reach you on the telephone and so I am using E-Mail:
I'm looking for a Spectrum expansion port connector. Can I get one from you or do you know of a source? It seems that a PC-ISA connector should work. Where can I get one?
I'm interested in connecting a PC-Keyboard to the Speccy. What do your keyboard stickers look like? Are they stuck on the top of the keys or on the fronts? Are they suitable for PC-Keyboards?
A question to the printer interface and ribbon cable (10,50): can you connect any PC-Printer? How does the software support work? Can I simple print with Spectrum commands?
Mathias Scheurer

Hallo Mathias, as for the expansion port connector I have a box full of defect or untested Spectrum Interfaces. I sell these for 3,00 Euros each so you can Christmas tree them (take them apart). In this way you can get a connector, that's cheaper than buying PCI-connectors and cutting them to size. Although they are usually available free from junk yards. Unsoldering them and sawing them to size is not everyone's cup of tea.
In order to connect a PC-Keyboard to the Speccy you need a keyboard interface. We offer the Proface. And then the stickers for the Keyboard are a good idea. They are stuck on top of the keys and so are easy to see but of course the keyboard is then more difficult to use on a PC.
The printer interface can be connected to any Epson-compatible needle printer. Even some ink-jet printers have Epson compatibility. I think there is one from HP and also the Canon Bubble-jet have one or more compatible types. Usually this information is available with the printer or printer documentation.
The interface needs at least one command to open the printer channel. Usually programs such as Tasword or Wordmaster include the necessary command. After you have opened the channel then LPRINT and LLIST as BASIC-Commands work normally, COPY usually doesn't work, as this needs a complicated output routine.

Florian has once again promised us an article (and he keeps his promises):
As to my promised article for SUC-Session. I have used the iMac to look at a couple of Spectrum emulators but in my opinion they either aren't that good or don't work at all for me. The Shoot em Up article is going to take a while but in the mean time I've had another idea: Last month I got myself a copy of „Manic Miner" for the Gameboy
Advance and think I could write a report about it for SUC Session. However I don't know if the other readers want to read about a console game in a Spectrum magazine, even if it is the translation of probably the most prestigious Spectrum classic of all time.
Florian Stadler

Hallo Florian, As to your article: Even if the Mac emulators are pretty useless, you can still write a report about them. Then the users will at least know in advance whether they want to get hold of an emulator or not. Your Sinclair also didn't only report on good games.
An article about a game from Spectrums past on the Game-boy would also be very welcome. Of course we wouldn't want to fill the magazine with this sort of article but one article is certainly OK, Especially as you can build in a comparison to the original (on the principle: is the Gameboy version better?).

Mathias has now gone into overdrive. He has to have an MB02:
Hallo Thomas,
please tell me when you get an MB02+ in, I'm interested. Is this floppy interface really the best for the Spectrum? Which do you use? Which is your 'Main-Spectrum' (the one you use the most)? Mathias Scheurer

Hallo Matthias,
I won't be getting any more MB02+'s, except maybe a second hand one. It's possible the follow up product will be built, it's not certain yet. It is with certainty the best diskette system as it has:
1) Tape-Emulation in that the diskette access with LOAD and SAVE works just like tape, so you don't have to modify your programs. If you want to load a program from cassette then there are hardware and software switches available.
2) It is the fastest interface and it formats HD diskettes with 1.86MB. And you can connect a standard drive without any crossovers in the cable or changes in the drive. A standard PC drive and cable is all that is needed.
3) Other than the +3 it's the only system which supports a hard-disk.
4) If you don't have a hard-disk you can still use the internal memory as a mini hard-disk (up to 512K). It's possible to store programs which can be called up with the simple pressing of a button ex. A Dissassembler.
So in short the hardware and the software are matched perfectly to each other and are simply the best. I use it myself and with it a +2 Spectrum. This is in my opinion the best set up, as it has a good keyboard and is stable without the incompatibilities of the +2A.

And someone else who is interested in a Diskette interface:
Hallo,
I wanted to buy a diskette drive for my Spectrum +2. As I'm at school and don't have a lot of money to spare I wanted to ask what possibilities exist and what they cost. For me it's important that the disk images which are available on the Internet can be transferred to it. Is there a construction kit for the MB03?
Greetings, Robert Doerfler

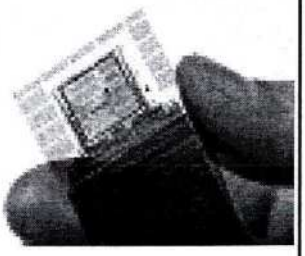
Hallo Herr Doerfler,
The cheapest possibility is the D80 Diskette interface. It comes from the Slovak republics Didaktik-factory and is widely used in the Czech and Slovak republics, it's not seen so often here in western Europe but we do offer our diskette magazine SCENE+ in this format.
I also have a DISCIPLE interface. The disciple was the for-runner of the +D and is compatible to it. This is the most common Spectrum diskette format.
At the moment we don't have an MB02 or MB03 in our programme. The MB02 used to cost 310,00 DM (about 105 pounds) and the MB03 if it comes certainly won't be cheaper and to this you have to add the price of the drive, power supply and cable, that very quickly adds up to 200 Euros (about 135 pounds). Though as I say it's not available at the moment, not even as a kit.
We can also offer the Opus Discovery System. The Opus is a large black box, larger than the Spectrum itself and three times as high. The drives are actually built into the Opus. And it also includes a Joystick port.
Technical Details and Price:
D80 + Drive + Power Supply. , 780k DD Diskettes 111,00 Euro (about 75 pounds)
Disciple + Drive + Power Supply. 780k DD Diskettes 143,00 Euro (about 96 pounds)
Opus Discovery, 1 x 720k Drive, DD Diskettes 118,00 Euro (about 79 pounds)
All three systems are supported by our club. All of these interfaces have a built in printer port, and the Opus also has a Kempston-Joystickport. The three systems are not compatible with each other and use different diskette formats and commands.

News in Brief

...and another IDE-Interface
competition for the IDE interfaces which we have presented in SUC-Session has arrived from the Czech Republic. This one will also work with the MB02+ and also supports the Russian TRD-Files. Sounds interesting, but whether it's true we don't yet know. Anyone who has already built or bought an interface from 8BC doesn't have to worry about their hard-disk data as the new interface should be 100% compatible to the old one.
Source: Hood of Crazytronic

Antique Toy'2002
This is just a virtual Spectrum-Show. Instead of everyone coming together to show off their new Demo's you should send them to the organiser of this 'virtual meeting'. Anyone who has a piece of previously un-shown work can send it up until the 31st December to the organiser:
Music:
megus_bw@mail.ru
Graphic:
triumph_hq@mail.ru
Source: Yerzmyey/ H-PRG

A Glass Z80
Sharp has demonstrated an LCD-Flatscreen with an integrated processor. With the CPUZ80 there is an LCD-Display together with the 8-bit-Processor and the necessary drivers for the screen and the memory on one glass plate. At last we will again see „Z80 inside". How it works, when the Z80 can only address 64KB...
Source: LCD + Odin



FLASH CARD Utility
It's also possible to download from the 8BC website a program to write Flash-Cards. So now maybe you just need the interface to do it - or? This should really be understood as a preview of the MB03+ which should have a Flash-Card interface built into it. Here once again the address: http://www.8bc.com/sinclair/DOWNLOAD/index.htm
Source: 8BC

IDE-Interface from 8BC
What an IDE-Interface looks like and how you can install it in an MB02+ is the subject of an 8BC website. At http://www.8bc.com/sinclair/DOWNLOAD/index.htm it's possible through the use of pictures to see a lot of details even if your knowledge of the Czech language is somewhat restricted.
Source: 8BC

Commodore One
Very puzzling rumours about a computer to follow in the footsteps of the C-64. Does it really exist? When, where? But the most puzzling is: The computer should not only be able to configure itself to run as a C-64 but also as other computers, and especially mentioned were the Z80 based computers such as the Schneider CPC, ZX 81 and the Speccy. A Spectrum in Commodore clothing? I don't want to restart the rivalry between the systems but it all sounds a little abstract, but possible...We'll keep you informed.
Source: Alexander Ausserstorfer, http://firmen5.chiemgau-net.de/ausserstorfer/Artikel/C1.pdf

Swedish Speccy
Sami Vehmaa from Sweden (ZXATASP HDD Interface) is a hardware constructor and has the following things in development:
- Compact Flash Interface
- Serial I/O Interface
- Spectrum +5 !!!

You must take a look at http://home.sol.se/amiga/
Sami has sent me a mail saying that Gary Lancaster (known for the +3e ROMs) is sitting on a terminal program and a web browser (for the start only text) for the Speccy!!!
In addition to that in the future there should be a +3e emulator for ZXATASP!
But the most exciting development is the Serial I/O Interface, which will allow the Speccy together with ZXATASP to access the big wide world.
The +5 is also a really neat thing:
00-16ad. 16K rom switchable with 512k flash & 512k ram.
16-32ad. 64K in 4 pages ULA mem.
32-64ad. 128K mem in 4 pages.
CompactFlash socket & a 2.5" IDE socket.
Highspeed Serial (16c550)
AY-3-8912A Soundchip
And altogether small and compact like a 48k. We'll keep our eye on developments.
Source: Mathias Scheurer

MB2.5 and now really MB03+
It seems there may really be an MB03+. 8BC is preparing for the production of the MB03+. It won't include all of the planned features, as some of them have been dropped for marketing reasons, to call it MB2.5, doesn't sound as good as MB03+ or?
Source: 8BC

ZXVGS 0.30
The operating system for all disk systems from Yarek Adamski is now available in a new version. To date it has been mainly used with emulators, only the disk images are once again not compatible with each other. So what then is the reason for it? Don't ask me, better the creator: zx@yarek.com
Source: Yarek Adamski, http://zxvgs.yarek.com

That was it::
SPECTRUMANIA 2002

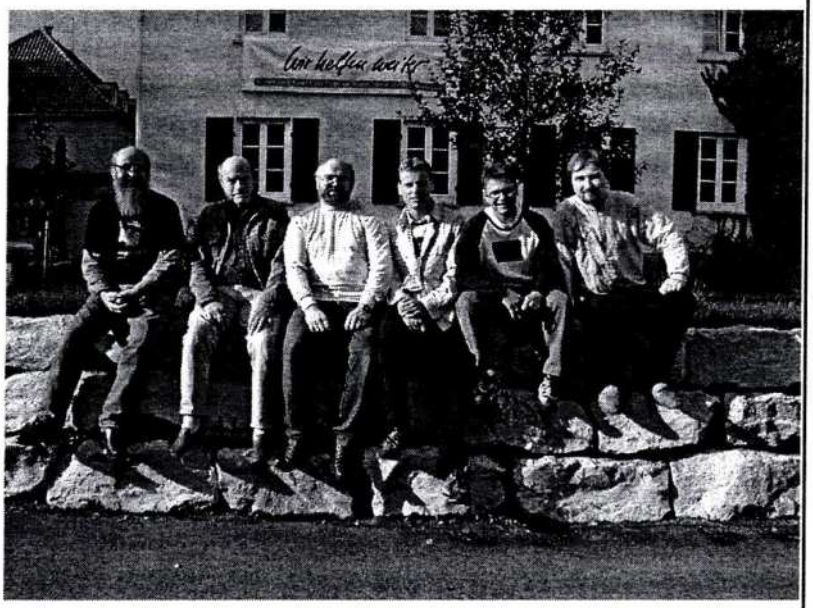
It's always good to meet up with friends. When the Speccy is there as well then it's just that much better. That's how you could describe Spectrumania, even though it took place at a smaller venue than usual it was as interesting as ever.
Only 12 people distributed over the 3 days managed to find there way to the event, which was located in the middle of Stuttgart and easy to reach. But let's start at the beginning:

The stress for me began a week before the event. I'd arranged the meeting in the rooms of the youth hostel and had wondered why they didn't send me more details or ask for any money in advance. As I just wanted to be sure I asked 2 weeks before the meeting if everything was OK, I had to wait a week and then came the answer, Sorry it's not possible the conference hall has already been taken...". Oh no. After massive pressure that hundreds of disappointed Spectrum users would probably leave the home in ruin and ashes, they gave in and promised to find us space in the main dining hall. Very practical =:)
A week later as I arrived with Mirko and met Norbert who as usual was there before us, there came the next surprise: No dining hall, the other group who were supposed to be using OUR Conference hall had decided that it was too small and had occupied OUR lovely dining hall instead. So off to the cellar of the neighbouring building, where the conference hall was located. Now, that sounds like it's pretty huge...Conference hall...but it wasn't. On this evening there were only five of us and so there was plenty of room. The next problem was we couldn't lock the door. At least the door didn't have a proper lock, but the bolts for the door did, so with a screwdriver Mirko knocked up a key of sorts, or one of us would have had to keep watch all night...
It started with a really small group of people, Mirko, Norbert and myself. Further user's arrived and so went the first evening, which we had really just planned for setting every thing up, instead it was a little more hectic.
Saturday was planned as the main day and as a number of Speccianer turned up, at times, things really got going. There was a lot of discussion about the Real Spectrum Emulator and about SCENE + with Mirko, and Norbert and Manfred discussed graphic printer routines for Norberts Ink Jet printer. Not a simple subject. The high point were the competitions, run by my wife Annette and her friend Simone. Two of the competitions were carried out in the form of a quiz show, whereby LCD surprised everyone with his level of knowledge. So he was able to take both of the certificates for the competitions „Spieleraten" (Guess the game) and „Demoraten" (Guess the demo) with him. He held back from the third competition in order not to win all of the certificates. So it was that Roland Albert probably through bribing the judges and other underhand tricks, who managed to get into the final of the Emlyn-Huges-International-Soccer-Competition and then win it.

We had arranged for a Stuttgarter Pizza service to provide the sustenance, unfortunately on Saturday we had forgotten to order soon enough. Why does he close at 10PM anyway? Just like all of the Stuttgarter Pizza services. So it was that we ended the evening at a local Greek restaurant with red wine and a large selection from the grill.

Following this we carried on for a while but at 3AM the last had lost any further interest in coding and playing. So we sealed the room again using Mirkos 'Key' so that we could continue on the Sunday until about 4PM. With the Spectrum there are no end to the subjects to be discussed and experimented with and so it was that at the end that 6 worn

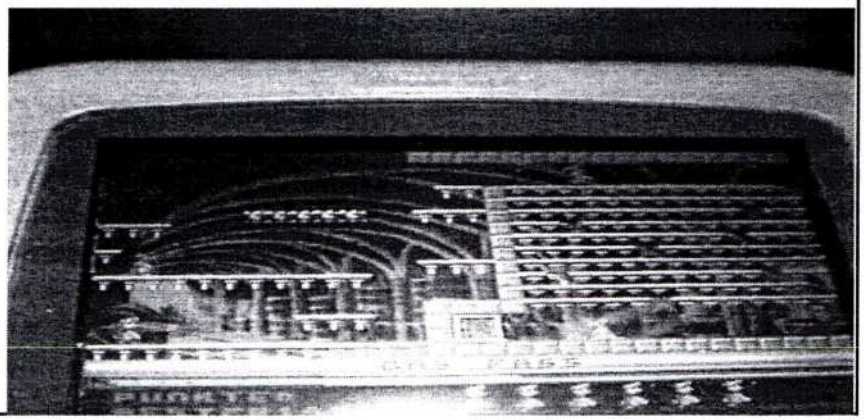
out Speccianer left the hall into brilliant sunshine, the only time we had seen natural light, except for the sunny smiles of the friendly personal of the youth hostel. It had been great.
It only remains to be said that there was a super atmosphere, especially as we had the building all for ourselves. I think we have found the venue for the next few years. Even though the room is a bit small we could handle a few more visitors. So with that... see you next year.
te



Manic Miner -

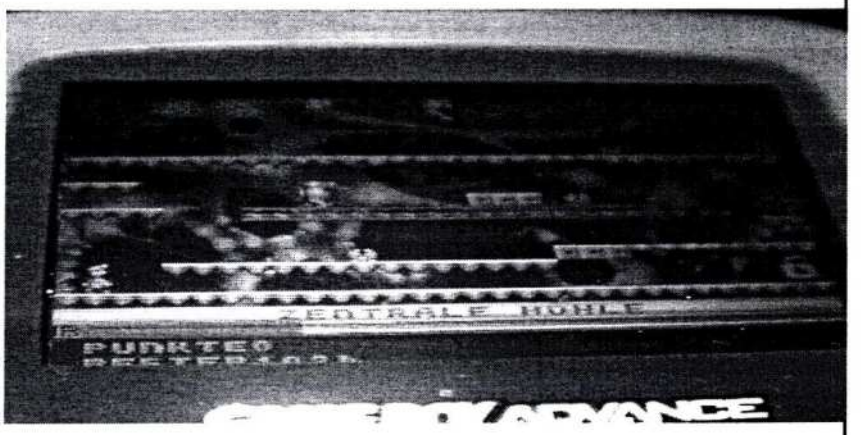
The Spectrum Classic returns on the Gameboy Advance...

...and with modern graphics and classic game play! It certainly isn't a lack luster conversion, with which programmers try to extract money from your wallet, but rather more a successful attempt to breath new life into a respected Spectrum classic. For the potential buyer it is of course important to know how near to the original the conversion is, and I think in this point you won't be disappointed. Here are the differencies in detail:
The GBA version is of course a lot more colourful, has some impressive background graphics and the objects to be collected have been animated. The size of the sprites and the way each level is constructed remains true to the original, so that the game play is very close to the Spectrum version. In reality just fast, as Manic Miner runs on the GBA just a touch faster than we are used to, which does tend to give the impression that the game is just a little more difficult. For that there are now passwords for every couple of levels and you get more lives at the beginning of the game. The „Skylab Landing Bay" Level has been made just a little bit easier. As well as this, it's also possible to continue in the same direction on a conveyor belt after falling onto it. The speciality with the GBA Version is the possibility to select an ‚Extended version' from the title screen in which there are a number of extra levels to challenge you. So that



this game is interesting even for those who have memorized all of the levels in the original version.

And the biggest advantage is that we can play our favourite game anywhere and anytime, given, that is enough light as it is well known that the display of the GBA is not the best and in this game you need to spring with pixel accuracy. And saving perhaps the best for last I should mention the sound which you get at the well known „In the Hall of the Mountain King" a short version of the tune for your enjoyment. And I shouldn't forget the Donau waltz from the Title screen. And for those who have decided to buy, you can also enjoy a special 'Game Over' and 'End sequence'.



Florian Stadler

Colour Reduction through the use of Error Diffusion

The -Colour reduction algorithm through the use of „Error Diffusion"-, or in other words we can say that we are using a system which distributes the error which gives the best results on the Spectrum and it's easy to accomplish, of course only if you know how it works.
As I've now become an expert in this area especially though my work on BMP2SCR, I would like to share my experience with others who haven't yet had the courage to experiment in this area, or simply because it's difficult to find information on this subject.
So: All error diffusion algorithms are based on the same principle but each produces a different result depending on which matrix is used to distribute the error. The principle is simple: You take a grey value pixel, for example one with the value 60, and we want to distribute the error over 8 grey levels (0,31,63,95,127,159,191,223), what do we need to do? First we have to calculate the difference (error) to the next lowest value (60-31=29), we note the value and then replace the pixel value with the next lowest value (31) and now we can display the pixel (value 31) on the screen. Now we take the difference, which we noted and distribute it over the neighbouring pixels. It is of course clear that we don't do this randomly. To do it we use what is called a Conversion matrix such as Floyd-Steinberg, Burkes, Stucki, Jarvis-Judice-Ninke or simplest. The simplest, which

doesn't have a name, looks like this:

```
X 1
1  /2
```

But what does this mean exactly? X is the actual pixel, for which we have just calculated the error,
The /2 means that we have to divide the error value by two, this becomes the sum for the two ones which are displayed to the right and beneath the pixel, so 29/2=14.5.
Next we have to take the result and multiply it by the values shown (in this case 1) and add it to the pixel value but we must not exceed the maximum value (255). And so we continue with each pixel in each row working alternately from left to right:

```
X 1
1   /2
```

And in the next row from right to left (zigzag):

```
1 X
  1 /2
```

Until the picture is finished and we have our result, an Error Diffusion Dithering picture.
Of course we can easily adapt this technique for the Spectrum: Where the values are simply 0 for black and 127 for white.
So 60 becomes 0 (Black), the difference is 60, divided by 2: 30, so we have to add this value to each pixel to the right (or left when we are scanning from right to left) as well as to the pixel directly underneath, other than that we do nothing else. If the value produced by the addition is greater than 255 then it is simply capped, in Basic it would look like this: IF value>255 THEN LET value=255

As I mentioned previously there are other ‚dithering' methods such as for example, Simple Common:

```
X 3
3 2 /8
```

With this it's a bit more complicated: The error has to be divided by 8, and then multiplied with 3, 3 and 2 and the result added to the correct pixel, but through this the result looks somewhat better.
Floyd-Steinberg:

```
  X 7
3 5 1 /16
```

Burkes:

```
    X 8 4
2 4 8 4 2 /32
```

Stucki (Extended Burkes):

```
    X 8 4
2 4 8 4 2
1 2 4 2 1 /42
```

Sierra:

```
    X 5 3
2 4 5 4 2
  2 3 2   /32
```

Jarvis-Judice-Ninke (JaJuNi):

```
    X 7 5
3 5 7 5 3
1 3 5 3 1 /48
```

So you can see, the matrix's become more and more complicated as the quality of the result we want increases. Which of course uses up more computer power/time. It's important to always use the zigzag scan to avoid nasty patterns forming in the picture.

Lets convert this area of the screen for the Spectrum using the Burkes algorithm:

```
245,200,150,100,050
170,000,160,000,060
```

So: The value underlined is where we are at the moment (150), the next lowest value for the Spectrum would in this case be 127 (White), so we can display the pixel on the screen. The difference is 23 (23/32=0.71875)
Right, the first value is 100, to which we add 0.71875*8=5.75 which gives us 105.75 (we can ignore the fractions and so the value is 105), the next value is 50, from which we make 0.71875*4=2.875+50=52 and so on. In the end we have (and the underlined value doesn't interest us any more because we have already put it onto the screen):

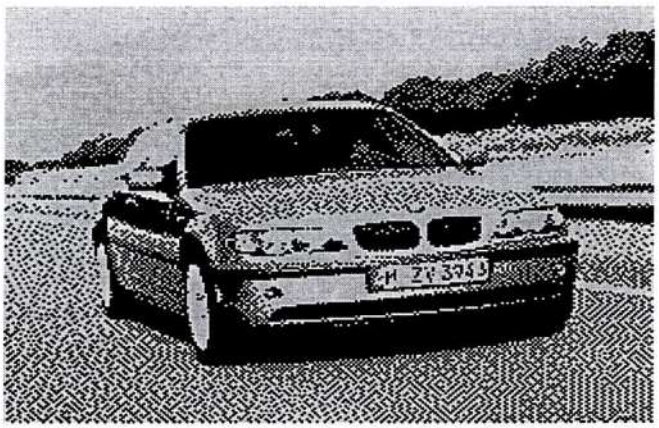
245,200,127,105,052
171,002,165,002,061

And now we repeat the whole procedure until the whole screen is completed.

To do it all in colour isn't any more complicated. We just have to do the same in all three colour planes (red, green and blue), and finally add them all together.

I hope my explanation was easy to follow. And next time we will all build an Intercontinental rocket complete with a hydrogen bomb: lol:.

LCD



Zlincon 2002

As Thomas cancelled out this year, I, LCD hat to visit the Zlincon alone and enjoy myself. With the terrible weather, hail and hurricane force winds it wasn't easy to get there and a number of roads were closed. The route planner that I had loaded into my notebook proved be an advantage that wasn't to be underestimated. In spite of that I arrived later than I had planned, but just in time for to see the DivIDE demonstration. DivIDE is an IDE interface which allows you to use Hard-disks and CD-ROM drives on the ZX. There are two variants available: One is a stand alone interface with an EEPROM for the operating system and the other is an accessory in SMD technology to be build into an MB02, without it's own system, rather as a parasite so to say, in the memory of the MB02.
During the presentation it was possible, with a trick, to read a secret message, which no-one wanted to explain to me (In spite of that I know that it concerned how many...(censored) the constuctor of the interface could produce, only 2 liters is perhaps just a little exaggerated :-O).
But back to the presentation: There was not only a music video presented in colourful chunks which unfortunately didn't look all that good but Zilog (codename) is working on a

new version of the converter which will correct the colour faults. As an expert in this field I am of course excited about the outcome.
At the end there was a small demonstration of Multitech Glory 2.0 a graphic mode with allows an improvement in the grey scale resolution, though I have to make the following observation: The results that were achieved with the 8BC MLT Converter, could be compared with one another, but for some reason the normal MLT results were always worse than those that I achieved with my BMP2SC program. In comparison Multitech Glory 2.0 was only marginally better than my results.
And to crown it all off there was a demonstration of a Multitech animation. It was a bit short, as it had to fit into the SRAM of an MB02, but impressive for all that. In a short sequence it showed an eagle in close up which then flew around a mountain.
Oh well, it looks as if I won't be able to avoid including the animation support from Multitech 16/72 into BMP2SCR Pro.
After this I showed a number of neat animations on my notebook which I had produced with my program, and which of course produced the expected enthusiastic response.
Next I went to have a look at the hardware. There were not only Spectrums +2 but a number of sawn up versions modified with extra connections. There were also 3 PC´s, and a C64 (Clearly a minority group), two Timex TC 2048 or 2068, two SAM Coupes, one of which had been heavily modified. Not only did it have an over-clocked Z80A instead of a Z80B, but also 4MB of internal RAM and number of extra gadgets which I didn't immediately recognize, there was also a non standard diskette drive built in which worked because of the built in controller.
This time there was also a Sprinter 2000 taking part, and it wasn't mine. It was built into an Amiga500 housing with an PC keyboard screwed onto it. Pretty clever! Only I asked myself what the fan was for as none of the chips in the Sprinter gets even warm.

As usual the evening was filled with Jaxon Hollis forcing me to partake of an excessive amount of alcohol (It was the fourth large beer and not the third, I remember it very well), so that I was out of commission for the rest of the day, whereby Jaxon only proved that he can handle rather more alcohol than I.
On the next day I took a look at a number of new pieces of software, such as: The last Courier II Demo, that is until I began to feel sick again (Not a result of the software but the Alc). As the only thing on my mind from this point was my heaving stomach I will end my report there and spare myself any further embarrassment. Just to say: When it was time to leave my blood/alcohol level had at least stabilized, and we managed to get behind the secret of why last year there were 8 mice in the terrarium and this year only 3: One rat was clever enough to escape from the terrarium and not to be run over by a car, mice are clearly too stupid for that.

LCD

Stars on the Internet

The Internet, unending space, here are the adventures of a surfer, Thomas... it's really as if your aboard the enterprise when your surfing the net, rather like captain Kirk exploring the universe

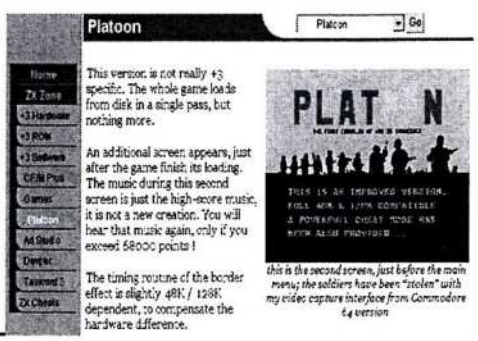
Thank goodness for external help. I was really glad that LCD and Matthias Scheurer contacted me with interesting addresses which it's worth mentioning here. There were also important tips from outside of the club so that we can really present some interesting sites.

Let's start with a coder group from Poland even though today they are certainly no longer all in Poland (the Internet makes that possible) and with that they are the most active group at least outside of the old Soviet republics. We're talking about the HOOY-Program:
http://republika.pl/hooyprogram/
We've presented this site once before. But the address has been changed and the site has of course been updated, reason enough for us to take another look.
As before the site contains a number of items about the group and it's activities. These are very wide ranging, from graphics, through sounds and Demo's. Especially with the Demo's you can see the advances in quality and the number available is astounding. There are also a couple of PC-Games to show off the talent of the programmers.
It's always worthwhile taking another look as this group which is always creating something new.

Now let's jumps across to England: The Magazine ZX DIGEST, earlier known as „Hackers Hangout" is a magazine which we have presented before but now there is a homepage for the magazine:
http://www.zxdigest.dsl.pipex.com/
It would be a bit over the top to do a big write up on this site as the homepage is nothing more than a full side of text without any background, colour , downloads etc. A shame but more should be coming. In spite of that I'm presenting it here as it's still a useful contact point for a really good magazine.

One of our members has put an article up on the internet und thinks that we won't notice:
http://www.truppel-online.de/spscarte.htm
Here you will find a description of a number of hardware improvements for the Spectrum +2, to remove interference signals from the internal cassette recorder and produce a better picture via the SCART socket. Unfortunately as a non-technical person I can't put the information together into an article but I'm sure you want to do that for us Ingo.....you agree...or???

This is a real pot of gold for +3 Users:
http://www.secarica.ro/html/zx_zone.html
This is how Mathias described this site to me and he is certainly right. Hardware, Software, Technical Information, there is everything here. For example an interesting solution to improve the sound quality of the +3 which usually sounds terrible or a modification to produce the missing COMPOSITE VIDEO Signal at last from a +2A/ +3.



But this site is not only for the hardware freaks, but also contains useful programs and games. These are in the DSK format so that they can be used by the emulators. I would certainly like someone to tell me how to convert these into files on a real +3 Diskette. I know you can, I just don't know how.
Anyway it's certainly worthwhile for any +3 owner to take a look at this site. Even those with the +2A will find things of interest, especially in the hardware section where the modifications apply just as much to the +2A as to the +3. For everyone else there are a number of standard TAP downloads of what was previously commercial software, though even the author of this site recommends that for downloads you should go WOS (World of Spectrum) .

Who likes Spectrum-Adventures? And which of you don't know about Zenobi? So for all of those who answered yes, that' me, Zenobi was a firm selling Spectrum adventures well into the 90's. This allowed the programmers to concentrate on the programming and not on the selling of their programs. The result of the stealing of copyrighted software over the internet lead to the ending of sales through Zenobi, but not only to awake old memories you can look at the following home page:
http://www.zenobi.co.uk/
Here you will find all sorts of information about Zenobi from the past and also current information. There are still programmers offering their adventure programs and through Zenobi it's possible to gain contact with them. Also there is a Zenobi CD on offer which contains all of the programs which were ever included in the Zenobi list of titles. Definitely worth a look for every Adventure enthusiast.

The next site is again in England and also in the language which a majority of people understand (I hope that the people in the Czech republic, Russia etc. learn something from that):
http://www.srcf.ucam.org/~pak21/spectrum/index.html
These pages from Phillip Kendall (has at least a FAQ from comp.sys.sinclair) are fairly simply constructed. Some text a bit of colour, a couple of utilities and games to download. What's really interesting is the collection of ROM's, which are available to download. Through the use of emulators such as the 'Real Spectrum' the number of people look for ROM images has increased dramatically, as they are needed to, for example emulate the Opus-Discovery etc. So don't be afraid, now you know where you can find them all. A very complete collection, it's amazing in how many languages you can find Spectrum ROM's...

And as the last site I want to present a real artist, who is well known from many graphic competitions, the results of which are often publicised in SCENE+ . I'm talking about GAS 13:
http://gas13.yuga.ru/screens/38/
GAS13 has spent a lot of time to creating very colourful graphics for the Spectrum, which are so good that you have to rub your eyes and still not believe that these were created on a computer which is 20 years old. He does the whole thing without the use of any

additional hardware or special programs. His main tool is Art-Studio and his great plus is talent. On his home pages you can not only view his work but also the story behind each picture. Often it has been events or simply something he has seen which inspired his work. In spite of the fact that he could produce his artwork on a more modern computer he has decided to stay with the Spectrum. Something which we can be very happy about. You also have the chance to write a comment about any of the pictures which I'm sure would make him very happy.

So that's it again from my side. I was really happy that I didn't have to search for a long time to find the links which were this time presented to me. I 'd liked to call on all surfers out there to make there input to these pages by telling me about interesting links. As I said at the beginning the Internet is huge and I can't find everything on my own.
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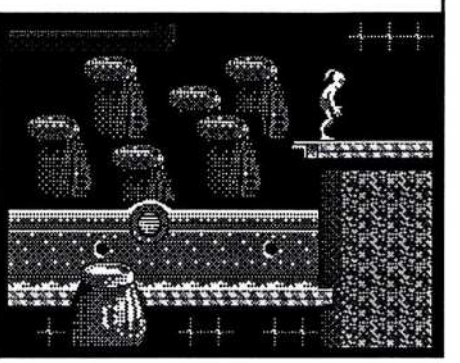
FUTURE SHOCKS

Once again I want to put a couple of programs under the magnifying glass, even if we can't unfortunately publish them in SCENE+. The reason is that these programs come from Russia, where a fair amount of new software still appears for the Spectrum. It's a shame but most of the Russian software or that produced by what were Russian states is in the TRD-Format, this is a diskette format for their systems, and which we know as Betadisk. The program's often load machine code from the diskette and the loading program is included in the boot block etc. etc. So that it's not possible to simply convert the program's for other diskette systems. It would be super if there were a group of users somewhere who would be prepared to take individual program's or groups of program's and convert them into normal Speci progs with a Basic-Loader and a Machine-Code part. Unfortunately such a group doesn't exist but perhaps we can animate a group somewhere into doing it if we can at least look at the programs using an emulator.

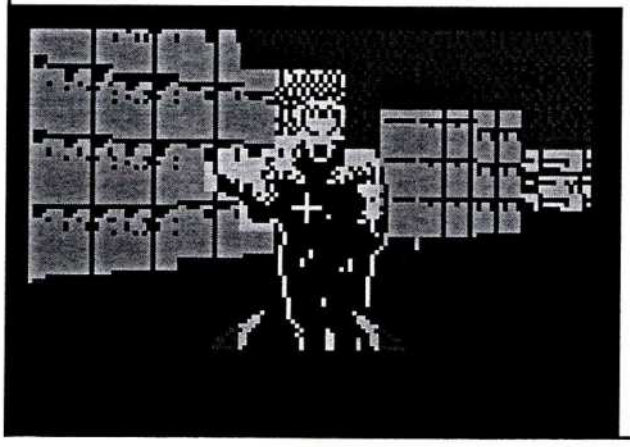
I received a CD containing a number of programs with the magazine „ZX DIGEST", which by the way is a magazine that I would highly recommend. That's reason enough to present these programs today:

ABE´S MISSION (Demo-Version)
Of course no one can say whether the Demo-Version of a new game will ever be turned into a final version but we can only hope. ABE is perhaps known to one or other of you through its success on the PC. I can't really tell whether the Speccy-Version is as good as the PC-Version, but I can at least say that the programmer did a good job on this game. I couldn't discover anything about the objective of the game but anyway it is very much like



PRINCE OF PERSIA and so it's likely that you have to rescue a princess or something similar.
The game play is not only very much like PRINCE OF PERSIA, but even better is the fact that the quality of the graphics is very similar too. By which I mean the really super animations, which allow Abe to wander through the various corridors. He can roll, hop, hang and climb (so one ability more than our Prince from Persia). In the game you probably have to solve a number of puzzles and make use of various artefacts but the Demo-version doesn't go that far yet. But with the Demo-version it's not only possible to look at the wonderful graphics but also to guess that a future version of : ABE´S MISSION will be a hit.

CITADEL (Demo-Version)
It's easy to describe this game. Doom! In principle an Ego-Shooter on the Spectrum. There have been a number of Demo-versions but to date not one complete game other than DOOM. That said CITADEL is certainly a long way down the development line, so that there is at least here more hope. In the Demo-version it's possible to admire the very colourful graphics and using the various weapons dispatch your opponent. The viewing area is very small being only 80 x 80 pixels. In spite of this they are very detailed and even the sky is animated. Though perhaps it would have been better to leave this out as with simpler graphics some things would have been easier to recognize. Nevertheless: The doors are easily recognised by their horizontal stripes and even in the Demo-version there is a large level through which you can shoot your way. But to tell the truth the Spectrum version doesn't really have the atmosphere of the PC or Playstation version. In spite of this well done and with an enjoyable sound track.



THE FLINTSTONES – Fred in Magic Wood
Yes, whether you believe it or not, the Flintstones are Speccy hero's. This game is following YABBA, DABBA DOO and THE FLINTSTONES the third with these stone age hero's.
But in reality that's a number of games in one. No action, no bowling, no building of houses. Fred has to collect various objects and do it whilst being very observant. All at once he finds himself in the middle of a magic forest (aha, so that's the reason for the title) and he must collect a many objects as possible and get to the finish. The special feature are the fields of various colours. If he treads for example on a blue field then all of the green fields become blocked by trees. If he treads on a yellow field then it's the blue fields which get blocked and so on. With some clever thinking you have to tread on the fields in the right order to reach the finish in the minimum number of moves, because the number of steps you have made are added up to give your eventual score. On another level the forest grows on the field which you have just

left and the aim is to collect all of the objects and tread on all of the fields. It really is quite a good game.
So a collection of really great ‚thinking' mans programs complimented by some typical entertaining Flintstones-Music.

KILL POKEMON
Not to be taken too seriously is this shoot-em up for POKEMON haters. Using some cross-hairs you shoot at POKEMONS which appear at random over the screen und...nana, who really want to shoot them? YES,YES!!! DIE, Pokemon, die. No, despite the very real sounding sounds of dying pokemon's this shoot-em up isn't really very addictive, the structure of the game is just too simple. You can switch on a Turbo-Mode in the main menu...more of a gag, as in this mode the sound-effects are simply slower.

OK good, so this is really only a taster there are of course many more programs. Anyone who would like to take a look at them or perhaps try to convert them for SCENE+ he/she can contact me via the usual club address or more speedily via E-Mail: sintech@online.de
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VGA-Box for the Speccy

Connect a PC-VGA or SVGA Monitor to the Spectrum

I always feel slightly strange when I have to write about myself and I don't do it very willingly. But as the Chief editor of the club magazine I'm responsible for the article and as owner of Sintech I'm also responsible for providing Spectrum users with classical and new computer accessories. It simply can't be avoided that in the editors part of the magazine I sometimes have to present products from Sintech especially when it concerns something new.

As is the case here: **The VGA-Box**

Firstly a little background information on the subject: A number of Speccies, even those of our readers are no longer on the desk but instead are in a cupboard, in the cellar or up in the loft. The Spectrum has simply been replaced on the desk by the PC, and those who miss their little Sinclair, well they simply start an emulator. Not all, but a lot use the argument that there simply isn't enough room on the desk for more than one computer and the PC is an absolute must because of the Internet connection etc. This sort of thing spurs me on to think about other solutions to the problem, because an emulator can never really replace the Spectrum. The Spectrum itself is really quite small and easy to place, the main problem is the monitor.
Norbert Opitz brought a solution to one of the Spectrum meetings over 3 years ago, it was a small box which converted the video signal from his Spectrum +2 into a VGA signal. He needed this device because the had bought an unbelievably expensive (especially back then) flat screen display and it only had a VGA input. The advantage was that with the flat screen, his whole Spectrum system was a lot smaller and he could transport it on his motorbike, which he used for crisscrossing half of Europe visiting Spectrum-Meets. (though even travelling on the train it was of course much smaller and lighter to carry). As far as it went it was good but a number of visitors to the Spectrum meeting were not very enthusiastic about the picture quality and at around 200 DM it was rather expensive. So I've had a look around.
From the start I found a number of suitable boxes but all of them in this rather expensive price range. But the hardware is supposed to be getting cheaper...or so I thought, unfortunately in this area the price today is around 90 Euros. I saw a ray of hope as SEGA brought out their Dreamcast and a suitable VGA-Box for it, the price was around 50,00

DM. With a bit of modification I thought I could get it to work with the Spectrum. Another mistake, the Dreamcast delivers different signals to those of the Spectrum. A similar problem existed with the PLAYSTATION 2 Box which had also appeared on the market, but I wasn't going to give up, I tested all of the available boxes, until I was eventually successful.

That there was an improvement in picture quality was clear from all of the new boxes I was testing, but I was only really satisfied with two boxes, whereby I selected one of them for the Sintech product range. I chose it firstly because it didn't get it's power from a game console but from an external power supply and secondly because it was possible to make exact adjustments to the displayed image.

So I've found a box and tested it, and it doesn't only deliver a good quality picture on a VGA or SVGA-PC monitor but has a number of adjustment possibilities. Because only through the adjustment of colour, Contrast and Brightness is it possible to achieve an optimum picture quality.

SINTECH is offering this box for 49,00 Euro's (about 33 pounds).

The only thing you need is a suitable cable to take the video signal from the Spectrum to the VGA-Box. With the128k Spectrum and the +2 you only need a simple cable with 2 wires and a suitable DIN Plug. PIN 1 of the RGB-Ports of the Spectrum is the COMPOSITE VIDEO-Signal, PIN 2 is the necessary ground connection. On the other end of the cable you need a standard Cinch-plug (Phono-plug) and the whole thing is ready. With the other Speccies it's rather more complicated, as you have to make a connection to the video signal at the input to the modulator. How you do this would be more than I can describe in this short report, especially as we have covered this modification in earlier issues of the magazine.

A connection cable which also allows the PC to be connected to the box is included. So you can select the PC or the Spectrum to work with the monitor by operating a simple switch.

In the early days the idea of this box brought large number of enthusiastic E-mails so I was sure that I was offering a product which users really wanted. However I must say one thing, the picture quality which you can achieve with an RGB cable connected to an RGB monitor (as recently described in SUC Session) is always better than can be achieved by the VGA-Box. The main reason for this is that the RGB signal is able to deliver a higher quality than the Video signal we are using. On the other hand even this video signal is better than the TV signal from the modulator. And the space saving advantage remains.

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